A STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL IMPACTS OF RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN AJMER CITY

अजमेर शहर में धार्मिक पर्यटन के सामाजिक–आर्थिक एवं सांस्कृतिक प्रभाव का अध्ययन

Synopsis of the Thesis

Submitted to

MAHARSHI DAYANAND SARASWATI UNIVERSITY

AJMER

For

Doctor of Philosophy

By

SANJAY SINGH RAWAT

Under the Guidance of

Dr. Monika Kannan

Astt. Prof. & Head

Department of Geography

Sophia College, Ajmer

NAME OF SCHOLAR: MR.SANJAY SINGH RAWAT

संजय सिंह रावत

TITLE OF RESEARCH WORK:

A Study of Socio-Economic and Cultural Impacts of Religious Tourism in Ajmer City

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LOCATION:

a) Institution/ Department where the work is to be done– Sophia Girl's College, Ajmer.

b) Geographical Area of Investigation-AJMER

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INTRODUCTION

Ajmer is located in a picturesque valley surrounded by Aravalli hills and located 32 kms, west of Jaipur. It was founded by Ajaypal Chauhan in the 7th century.Ajmer derived its name from 'Ajay Meru' or the invincible hill. Here he built India's first hill fort, Taragarh also popularly known as 'Garh Beetli'. The Chauhans dominated till the end of the 12th century. In 1556 A.D. it came under the Mughal empire.In the 19th century it came under the British rule. Pushkar is located seven miles to the west of Ajmer and separated from it by the Nag Pahar. According to Padma Purana, Brahma, the creator of the world was in search of a suitable place to perform a yagna. As he reflected, the lotus fell from his hand and he resolved to perform the yagna where it fell. The lotus, rebounding struck the Earth in three places; water issued from all the three and Lord Brahma called the place Pushkar, after the Lotus.

In Ajmer is located the final resting place of the saint, Khwaja Moin-ud-DinChishti, the bestower of Boons. It is popularly known as Ghareeb Nawaz. Also the sacred Pushkar Lake with the world famous temple of JagatpitaBrahmaji, temple of Badri Nathji, Sri Ramavaikuntha temple holds special importance for the Hindu pilgrims. The Parsi Fire temple, Soni-ji-ki Nasiyan (Red temple) are some of the other religious sites of importance.

The world famous Pushkar Fair, Annual Urs of Khwaja Moin-ud –Din Chishti at Ajmer, TejajiFair (Sursura), Jhula Mahotsav (Pushkar), Kalpavriksha Fair (Mangliyawas), Badshah Procession (Beawar), Devnarayan Fair (Devmali) etc are celebrated by all in traditional way. Thus, the harmonious blend of all religions and culture has given a unique identity to this pious land and has spread the message of religious tolerance and brotherhood.

IMPORTANCE OF PROPOSED INVESTIGATION

Ajmer is one of the holiest places for the Hindus. Every year millions of worldwide devotees come to Pushkar to pay homage to the Jagatpita Brahma temple, old Rangji temple, Atmateshwar temple, Warah temple etc and to take a holy dip at the sacred Pushkar Lake.

Millions of pilgrims come to pay homage at the shrine of Sufi saint, Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti. Ajmer is also an important seat of centre of the other Religions. The Soni – ji-ki-Nasiyan (Red temple) and the Nareli Tirthat tracts thousands of Jain pilgrims each year. Similarly the Fire Temple known as Agiary Temple of the Parsi community, the Gurudwara at Pushkar of Sikh Community and the St.Anslem's Church of Christian Community are the important religious centres which attracts pilgrims to Ajmer throughout the year. Tourism

industry has emerged as a significant factor in a nation's economy Pilgrimage tourism has emerged as a new trend world-wide wherein the tourists visit the religious sites for varied reasons.

The number of F.T.As (Foreign Tourist Arrivals) in India during 2010 increased to 5.78 million whereas in 2009 was 5.17 million. The growth rate in F.T.A.s during 2010 over 2009 was 11.8%. Tourism plays an important role as a Foreign Exchange Earnings (F.E.E.) from tourism were Rs. 64889 crore in 2009 as compared to Rs. 54960 crore in 2009 registering a growth of 18.8%.

The number of domestic tourists in India during 2010 was 740.21 million as compared to 666.80 million in 2009,with the growth rate of 18.8%. The increase in the no. of pilgrims have led to numerous challenges like increase in crime ,terrorist activity, refugee problem, visa issues, drug problem etc.

OBJECTIVES-

The research study 'A Study of Socio-Economic and Cultural Impacts of Religious Tourism in Ajmer City' encompass the following Objectives-

- To find out the socio-cultural and political impacts of Religious Tourism in Ajmer District like Population Growth Crime, Refugee problem, Drugs usage, unhealthy living conditions etc.

- To study the economic impacts i.e. change in the Land-use Economic conditions, Per-capita earnings, forms of labour etc due to Religious Tourism in Ajmer.

- To explore major problems of tourists places and to suggest remedial measures to develop Religious Tourism in Ajmer.

- To study the impact of Climatic variables on Ajmer and its effect on Religious Tourism in the study region.

- To study the political impacts of Religious Tourism in Ajmer and importance of Religion in promoting Peace.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Ahmed (2015) has highlighted the direct, indirect and induced impact of tourism on Indian economy. The direct contribution can be seen in sectors like Entertainment, transport, hospitality whereas the Indirect and induced impact can be seen in the Investment and supply chain activities sector. The total impact of direct, indirect and induced contribution is known a Multiplier Effect. He concluded that there is direct relationship between intensity of Pilgrimage tourism and generation of income and employment. Due to increase in no. of pilgrims there has been increase in the direct and indirect earnings of shopkeepers, Hotels & Restaurants and the resultant development of entire society and area.

Ashfaq and Parveen(2014)argued that the Tourism is the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir Economy as being the 'Land of Walis' (Saints),Pilgrimage occupies a central place. They arrived to such conclusions after analysing the data obtained through Questionnaires and secondary data. The share of Pilgrimage tourism in the Economy of the state has risen to 7.20% in 2011-12 of the total Gross Receipts of state. It has led to change in the Land-use pattern, demographic set-up, culture and economic conditions.

Clifford(1988) argues that culture has less to do about the roots and origins and more focus is on translations & transplantations. He talks about the societies undergoing the phases of transformation due to the forces of modernity, industrialization and tourism. He concludes that cultural and political neutrality needs to be achieved while promoting tourism.

Hajare (2013)points to the fact that the development of tourism in state leads to creation of many Direct and indirect employment opportunities. Raigad has a treasure trove with beautiful beaches like Alibag,Varsoli etc and historical forts like Raigad,Kulaba, Janjira. The Elephanta caves and the Matheran hill station has its own unique rich culture and heritage. He concluded that the govt. bodies should work with local people to help Raigad achieve its tourism potential.

Ines(1996) states that Pilgrimage tourist as one who visits a specific place and whose intention of pilgrimage could be religious or non-religious in nature but within a Divine context.

Koundal (2016) gives the opinion that in Jammu & Kashmir, there are number of religious and natural places of tourist attraction amongst which Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine occupies a prominent place. The importance of Pilgrimage Tourism has risen with the ongoing terrorists incidents all over the world. It is found that with the increase in no. of pilgrims there had been an increase in direct indirect effect on the income and environment. Also the Pilgrimage Tourism should be encouraged and its negative impacts on environment should be minimised.

Menon (1993)in his UNESCO sponsored Case Study of Jaisalmer, Khajuraho and Goa, talks about the Krippendorf framework for evaluating the phenomenon of tourism which is viewed as resultant of four forces. These forces are-Society with its values (the socio-cultural sub-system); the economy and its structure (the economic sub- system); the environment and its resources (the ecological sub-system) and the State and its policies(the political sub-system).He raises his concern over the negative effects of Pilgrimage Tourism on culture and heritage with the increase in no. of tourists in coming years.

Olsen, Ferraris and Martin (2009) studied the cross-intersections of Religion, Tourism and Pilgrimage. The research provides, insight of the management of religious sites and the prevailing religious tourist phenomenon.

Kevin Griffin talks about Religious tourism(Pilgrimage Tourism) and the possible outcomes of the rise of international religious tourism travel. Also interesting light is thrown on the New Age travellers experiences to Machu Picchu in Peru and about the different perspectives about 'religious product' by intellectuals world-wide.

Ratz (2000)did research on Lake Balaton area (Siofok region)Using Irridex and Destination Life-cycle model to find out the socio-economic and political factors contributing to the region's development . Also the positive and negative effects were found using Delphi Survey. She conclude that political and socio –economic factors influence process of tourism development and government policy plays crucial role.

Rizzello and Trono(2013) in their research points to the fact that city of Bari witnesses a regular flow of pilgrims by their veneration of the relics of the holy Bishop Nicholas of Myra. The geographical position of Basilica having seafront facilitates the arrivalof pilgrims. They conclude that the city of Bari and Puglia Regional Administration should encourage longer stay among religious tourists and market it as 'Religious and Cultural product'.

Rodrigues(2012) studies the potential impacts of Pilgrimage Tourism in a Catholic context of Tyburn Monastery, New Zealand. He tries to find the visitors motivations and experiences for visiting the monastery. He concludes that the religious motivation was the foremost reason for visiting the monastery along with other reasons like search for peace, curiosity etc.

Sarda (1941) provides a vivid and detailed description of Ajmer-Merwarra. He talks about the history of Ajmer under Chauhan period, Pathan& Rajput period, Mughal period, Rathore and Maratha period and the British period. He throws an interesting light on the Festivals & Fairs of Ajmer Religion, Arya-Samaj, DargahKhwaja Sahib, origin and History of Pushkar and on Mers.

Shinde (2015) in her study found out how religious tolerance has increased due to religious tourism. The tolerance involving diversity and pluralism was examined at two levels, intra-religion and inter-religion. She concludes that at Pilgrimage centres different set of opportunities to get exposed to religious and cultural aspects become available to 'other people' belonging to other religions and help in building tolerance towards others.

Terzidou, Stylidis and Szivas (2008) points that Pilgrimage is historically related to Tourism and Religion which gave birth to Religious Tourism. In their research, they tried to find the perceptions of local residents on the socio-economic impacts of Religious Tourism on the island of Tinos, Greece. They found that economic considerations override the concerns of other local groups.

Thakur (2014) studied about the holy trinity of Religion, Economy and Polity in Pushkar where the former two were explicit and audacious whereas latter was implicit and contained. He argues for a middle-path of Religious-Economic category in Pushkar.

Tod (1829) had explicitly described about the history of Rajpoot tribes and about Mewar, Marwar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Dhoondar, Haravati -their history, culture, exploits etc. He also wrote about the religious establishments, festivals and customs of Rajputana. He had given vivid account ofPushkar Lake, the geological details of Pushkar and Ajmer, its legend, about Aja-pal-the founder of Ajmer and of Mairs or Meras. He concluded that Pushkar and Ajmer (Mairwarra) was a place of great historical and religious importance.

Tomar(2012) evaluated the Pilgrimage Tourism in North India at five places-Mata Vaishno Devi,Chintpurni/Jwala Devi, Golden temple, Kurukshetra and Haridwar using Questionnaires. She concluded that majority of pilgrims visit during holy period i.e. Navratras and with families. Also majority of pilgrims visit to perform rituals followed by leisure and other activities.

Venkatesh and Raj (2016) made a comparative study of the Positive and Negative effects of tourism industry in Tiruchirappalli district. They concluded that government should take initiative and formulate policies to support and strengthen tourism in the region.

Vijayanand (2012) studied that Pilgrimage tourism based on religious sites face many problems like conflicts arising due to difference in faiths, thefts, vandalism, tourist safety etc. He concluded that Pilgrimage tourism is an important tool in diversifying the nations sources of earning . If proper planning and implementation is done in Tamil Nadu keeping in view the safety and concern of Touriststhen only Tourism industry would develop.

RESEARCH GAPS:

Tod and Sharda had provided information about the religious importance of Ajmer and Pushkar as Pilgrimage centres but less light was shed on the socio- cultural effects of Pilgrimage tourism in Ajmer. Thakur did research on effects of Religion and Economy due to Pilgrimage tourism. He ignored the Political impacts of Pilgrimage tourism. Ratz, Rizzello and Trono and Terzidou, Stylidisand Szivas talked about the Socio- cultural impacts and Political impacts of Pilgrimage tourism on Lake Balaton area (near Siofok), City of Bari and on island of Tinos, Greece. No, such research study has been made on Ajmer, including Pushkar.

Rodrigues studied about the potential impacts of Pilgimage tourism of Tyburn Monastery, New Zealand and about the visitors motivation. Less studies regarding the visitors motivation have been done in Ajmer.

Not much research has been done on the political impacts of Pilgrimage tourism on Ajmer and Pushkar and the change in Land –use in Ajmer caused due to it. Less research have been done on finding out the 'Level of Satisfaction' of the Pilgrims in Ajmer.

HYPOTHESIS:

Hypothesis is an indispensable part of research work. The Hypothesis of my research work is as follows-

- Religious tourism does not cause any effect on the society and culture of Ajmer.

- Religious tourism does not cause any political impact or any Economic impacts i.e. on the Land – use of Ajmer etc.

- There is no direct relationship of Religious tourism and crime, Drug trafficking, refugee problem etc in Ajmer.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research study would be based on the data collected from Primary and Secondary Sources. Primary data will be collected by- Delphi Survey to find out the possible positive and negative effects in three fields namely socio- cultural , political and land – use . It would be done in three stages

Resident – Mail survey through Structured Questionnaires to be done to find the Residents mean response to tourism effects on regions. The responses on various variable will be evaluated on Likert Scale, using Cluster or Systematic Sapling. Functional behaviour and demographic information will be collected through interview and intensive Questionnaires. Questionnaires will be filledby tourists at selected tourist destinations through Random Sapling Method. To study the behaviour of pilgrimsand to obtain their opinion on various aspects of pilgrimage sites. Information will be collected using Structured Questionnaires whose preliminary draft would be pre-tested. Also classification ofthe response of the Respondents to be done on basis of Gender, Age, Annual Income ,Area(Rural/Urban),Occupation, Education, Type of Pilgrim and Responses would be classified and presented in tabular form, in no. and percentage. Chi-Square test would be

applied to study the differences with regard to various Qualitative Aspects highlighted by Respondents.

The 'Level of Satisfaction' of tourists would be analysed by noting their views on various facilities and converting them into numerical-values. Factor-wise level of satisfaction is calculated and tabulated.

$$Sti = MI:Ni/N$$

Sti=Satisfaction Index for the i th factor.

Mi=Numerical Values for particular level of satisfaction for the ith factor.

Ni=No. of respondents during the particular level of Satisfaction for the ith factor.

N=Total no. of Respondents for that factor for all levels of Satisfaction.

Tourist Survey through Questionnaires to be done to study the socio-cultural, political and land-use impacts. Large sample would be used to survey tourists of different nationalities, profession, age groups in different languages. Mixed-method approach would be used consisting of Structured Questionnaires and Semi-structured interview. Interview would be taken of people tostudy the various impacts of Pilgrimage Tourism. Sample of 25 respondents would be taken from various places and qualitative content analysis would be done. In the interview, Snow-Balling sampling method would be used

Secondary data will be collected by-

Police Crime reports of various years of Ajmer would be obtained. Data of various crimes committed by Locals and Non – Locals belonging to different religions would be tabulated, classified and analysed. Data would also be collected through District Gazetteer, District Census Hand book, published and unpublished thesis, Travel Books, Monographs, Newspapers, Periodicals etc.

CHAPTERIZATION

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Ch- 4. Impact of Climate Variability

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7.2 Challenges - Riots , Refugee and Drug problem.

7.3 Satisfaction Index

7.4 Pilgrim's motivation

Ch- 8.Summary, Suggestions and Conclusions

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(Signature of the Research Guide)

Dr. Monika Kannan

Head, Department of Geography

Sophia Girl's College

Ajmer (Raj.) - 305001

(Signature of the Candidate)

Mr. Sanjay Singh Rawat

Research Scholar

Department of Geography

Sophia Girl's College, Ajmer-305001.